Sources of Internet Health Information

There are literally thousands of health-related Internet resources maintained by government agencies, universities, and nonprofit and commercial organizations. Following are the addresses of Usenet groups (newsgroups), mailing lists, and reputable sites that link to other sites with medical information. This list is by no means complete; it is offered as a jumping off point.

Usenet Groups

(Access is through the Internet provider)
bionet.immunology (immunology research and practice)
bionet.aging (issues related to aging theory and research)
misc.health.diabetes (discussion of diabetes management in daily life)
sci.med.diseases.cancer (cancer treatment and research)
sci.med.vision (treatments for vision problems)

Mailing Lists

(to subscribe, send an E-mail message to the address given; in the message area type "subscribe," followed by the name of the list and then your name)

Alzheimer's Disease
List name: ALZHEIMER
Subscribe: *listserv@wubois.wustl.edu*

Breast Cancer
List name: BREAST-CANCER
Subscribe:
listserv@MORGAN.UCS.MUN.CA

Stroke
List name: STROKE-L
Subscribe: *listserv@UKCC.UKY.EDU*

Geriatrics
List name: GERINET
Subscribe:

listserv@UBVM.CC.BUFFALO.EDU
(Source: *A Guide To Healthcare and Medical Resources on the Internet* by Michael S. Brown)

World Wide Web Sites

American Cancer Society:
http://charlotte.npixi.net/acs/facts.html

American Heart Association:
http://www.amhrt.org/ahawho.htm

American Medical Association:
http://www.ama-assn.org/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *http://www.cdc.gov/*

Department of Health and Human Services: *http://www.os.dhhs.gov/*

Food and Drug Administration:
http://www.fda.gov/

National Cancer Institute:
http://www.nci.nih.gov/

National Institutes of Health:
http://www.nih.gov/

National Institute for Allergies and Infectious Diseases:
http://www.niaid.nih.gov/

National Library of Medicine:
http://www.nlm.nih.gov/

Oncology Data Base/University of Pennsylvania (ONCOLINK):
http://cancer.med.upenn.edu/about_oncolink.html

Search Programs

Because the Internet contains no central indexing system, getting the information you want quickly can be a major challenge. That's where search engines come in. These powerful tools can help narrow the field if you have a specific topic to pursue, or the name of a specific organization but no address for its site. Input a few words that describe what you're looking for, and the searcher returns a list of sites related to your query.

Be aware, however, that although a searcher can point the way, it does not evaluate the information it points to. For example, a search on the words "breast cancer" is just as likely to point to a page advertising a reconstructive surgeon or a health food store's article on the purported benefits of phytochemicals as it is to the National Cancer Institute. The reason? Scott Stephenson, production engineer and spokesman for Webcrawler, one of the popular searchers, explains. "Webcrawler scans documents and counts the number of times a particular word or expression searched for appears on a Web page. That alone determines whether the page is listed in our results, and where it appears on the list." This means that by mentioning, say, breast cancer many times in the Web page copy, a savvy marketer of bogus medicinals could draw a lot of people to his or her site. It is up to the visitor to evaluate the information the site contains. Here are a few of the many search engines:

Alta Vista:
http://www.altavista.digital.com/

Excite: *http://www.excite.com/*

Lycos: *http://www.lycos.com/*

Webcrawler:
http://www.webcrawler.com/

Yahoo:
http://www.yahoo.com/Health/Medicine/

—*M.L.*